

deep-water that whipped the blood with its air and its memories:

Oh, blow, ye winds, I long to hear you!
Blow, bullies, blow!
Oh, blow today and blow tomorrow!
Blow, my bully boys, blow!
"Come along in the chorus there, Pericles!"
Oh, blow today and blow tomorrow!
Blow, bullies, blow!
Oh, blow away all care and sorrow!
Blow, my bully boys, blow!

THUS, with song, the Lady Mine that morning winged her way out over the bar to the day's work. But when the afternoon was yet young Pericles O'Brien and Father Israel were standing alone in the Lady's bows, their gaze fixed doubtfully on a sail as yet no larger than a gull's wing on the sea's rim to the westward. Silk Hat had just left them to take in an ill-smelling tramp from Japan. The rest of the pilots had been homeward bound the last two hours on the bridges of as many different steamers.

Of a sudden, and as one, doubt passed from the watchers.

"Square-rigger that, Father!" exclaimed Pericles spiritedly.

"Aye, and that'll be the Gloaming—none other due," answered the old pilot; but the quality of eagerness that had theretofore marked his speech of the clipper was gone from his voice. "Old gal's shown up too late for me to even get a look at her," and as he said this he was marking the time by his watch. "Korea'll be coming along directly on schedule just like a railroad train—just a few minutes more now."

This was barely away from his lips when a plume of smoke rose to the south'ard of the sail.

"There she is now!" he exclaimed.

His glasses went up again; but to bear only for a second on the China mail liner. It was the sail that drew his gaze. Followed a full minute's silence, and then:

"Well, I've kept my promise to ye, Pericles. Ye'll see the last clipper on all the seas." An effort to smile was a failure. "Ye'll stand out and give her her orders.

upon life and the work one's hands found to do, as did this sea king at three score and ten. He watched him, with a wonderful tenderness in his gray eyes, climb the Korea's high black side and pass on to her bridge. And yet cold steel could not have been harder than the expression of those eyes when, a half-hour later, he stood on the poop of the Gloaming, hove to ten miles off the Gate, facing her chief mate, a tall, blue-eyed fellow, bearded like a pard and garbed like a scarecrow.

THEY'VE got me beaten, Capt'n O'Brien," the man in the scarecrow garb was saying wearily. "I'd better go on in."

And with the biting, cutting lash of a whip in his voice Pericles answered, "I'll come back a man or I'll not come back at all." Not an hour ago I stood out there on the Lady Mine beside an old man, who told me proudly that that was what you said to him when you bade him goodbye two years ago. And you call this coming back a man!" A sweep of Pericles' right arm embraced the signal of distress snapping from the monkey gaff over their heads, the tale of neglect aloft and aloft, the sailor lolling at the wheel, the crew in a sullen and murmuring cluster in the narrow waist. "Would a man who was half a man think of bringing a ship home in this state, admitting himself a failure, admitting that he'd let r'raff like that standing down there beat him, giving 'em a commission to make his name a byword up and down the seas for the rest of his life? No! A thousand, thousand times no, Bob Sears! He'd die first!"

"Good God! don't you—can't I make you understand what I've been through?" exclaimed Sears, rising to the lash. "Ever since Graham, the master of this ship, walked overboard in his craziness—committed suicide sixty days ago—I've kept this deck night and day alone, with my life in my hands! Graham left mutiny behind him. It has stayed with me! What sleep I've had I've snatched in spells of minutes in that chair by the wheel! I've been alone, alone! I've told you we sailed from Sydney without a second mate. There has been no one to stand by me! Not one down there in that whole lot to trust! They've defied me! Knifed me! See!" He tore open the tattered front of his shirt

thing that I'd cherish in my memory as long as life lasted—just seeing her. I pictured to myself the pride of the man who was bringing her home, and how I'd find her—bright and clean and trim— But never mind that. You may call all this rotten sentiment—"

"I don't," murmured Sears, his gaze coming back from the land. "I understand. Because she stands for what she does was the reason I signed in her, the reason I wanted to come home in her."

"All right then," went on the wrecker, his voice and expression unchanged by this admission; for it was a grim fight that he had entered upon. "The command of the Gloaming passed to you when Graham, her Captain, killed himself. You've brought her this far, within sight of her original destination. But her owners' orders are that she shall proceed forthwith for Puget Sound. I've given 'em to you. The ship is seaworthy, and you've plenty of grub and water. But Puget Sound lies to the north, not over there."

Sears' gaze had gone away again toward the coast hills, whose summer cloak of green the descending sun was now slashing with oxheart and purple and gold. And once more Pericles laid on the lash mercilessly:

"I said the Sound lies to the nor'ard; but there's an easy time waiting you over there tonight, Sears. Plenty of booze there, and—"

"I'm done with that sort of thing!" the man in tatters cried. His head lifted proudly, and his blue eyes flashed dangerously as they met Pericles' steady glance.

"But you'll not be done with it if you quit here!" taunted the wrecker.

Still again Sears' gaze sought the home hills and the gleaming, beckoning Gate, and, despite what was in his heart, Pericles O'Brien held his peace; for he knew that out of the storm he had stirred in the breast of this boy either a man or a manikin would speak. But whatever Bobby Sears' decision was to be it must be his own decision and no other's. For his soul's sake he must decide for himself. And suddenly, with an intake of breath that shook him, he faced the man at his side.

"I go on to the Sound!" he said valiantly, his head up, his chin out, and his eyes on fire. "And I—I don't know how to thank you, Capt'n O'Brien."



"God bless you, old ship!" shouted the old skipper.

And say howdee to her for an old man who's—who's near the end as she is, won't ye?"

"Here, here, Father Israel! Mustn't play on that string!"

"Things we been talking about this afternoon kind o' made me blue, I guess. I know ye won't ever repeat 'em, Pericles; but if ye ever hear anybody too critical, inclined to be a bit unkind, just ye put in a word for my boy. Ye have my word for it, Bobby Sears was always the soul o' honor. A good many think he was shabby to me,—oh, I know, Pericles, how folk talk. I've lived a long time,—but getting a bit in the wind was his only fault. If he'd only send me a line; if I only knew where he was, how he's coming along, whether he's alive or—"

Father Israel could not go on, and, taking him by an arm, Pericles led him aft to help him make ready to board off to the Korea, which was lifting her great bulk closer by the second. Ten minutes afterward he was going over the Lady's rail, saying, "With this wind ye'll be in by sundown, Pericles. I'll wait dinner for ye at Jack's." And from the boat that carried him down to the liner, towering like a skyscraper under the Lady Mine's lee, he shouted back, "Don't ye forget to give the Gloaming my best regards!"

In that moment came a renewal of faith to Pericles O'Brien, and he knew it was a good thing to look kindly

and exposed his chest. A half-healed slash crossed its width. "See!" He lifted his sleeves and held up two cruelly wounded forearms. "My clothes are fastened to me—sticking to me with my blood!"

To this impassioned utterance Pericles' cold, scorn-tipped answer was, "And when mutiny walks a ship's decks it's the duty of officers to let daylight through it."

"Yes—when they have arms!" came the retort. "But there isn't a gun in the vessel. Graham threw his own, mine, overboard—all the handcuffs, every means of defense or offense that we had. I've had nothing but my two hands and a belaying pin. I've not dared to leave this poop to enforce an order! And with it all I've come through this far! I could have made for Apia, for Honolulu: but I didn't—I came on!"

The wrecker's face was granite, his eyes two bayonet points. "Sears," said he solemnly, "it has fallen to your lot to bring the last clipper—practically the last real sailing ship on deep water—home. Men were talking today on that pilot schooner over the side about this vessel. Anyone of 'em would have felt it an honor to have performed even the small service of piloting her in. An old sea king—your grandfather—was one of them. The last thing he said to me was, 'Don't forget to give the Gloaming my best regards.' I can't do that. Personally I looked forward to seeing this vessel as some-

"Then I go with you as your mate!" cried Pericles in triumph. The next second he was shouting down over the rail at the Lady Mine, "Go home! I'm going on to the Sound!"

AS he turned to receive his Captain's orders three sailors came aft from the crew.

"But we ain't goin' on!" snarled the foremost one, a tow-headed ox of a man. "We shipped for 'Frisco, an' to 'Frisco we're—"

In that instant six feet and two inches of brawn clothed in blue serge launched itself from the break of the Gloaming's poop, and the speaker dropped in his tracks. Right and left the two at his sides went sprawling into the scuppers, and straight on to where the rest stood, seized of surprise and wonderment and panic, Pericles passed like a flame, a belaying pin in each hand, and the cry of "Maintops'l haul!" on his lips. A moment they wavered, and then, like sheep, broke to do his bidding.

And that evening the last rays of the setting sun lighted the faces of the Gloaming's crew looking up at her new chief mate where he stood in the weather gangway snapping at them, with succinct emphasis:

"The fellow you call Dutch Charlie—that tow-headed one who's down in the lazarette now, triced up and blubbing—he was just playing at being your head devil. He isn't a devil at all: only a cheap imitation. But I'm a real one, and if any of you doubt it—why, just start something. Ye're homeward bound in a clipper ship,—the last one,—and ye're going to take her home in clipper style. That's all! Relieve the wheel and man the lookout!"

But never did men forgather in any group without a doubting Thomas among them, and true to this rule there was one in the last clipper's company. And as he

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